

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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R 041635Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8487

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 1446

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LT, SF

SUBJECT: FAREWELL CALL ON LESOTHO PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN

1. DURING AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL, AUGUST 3, PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN (A) CONGRATULATED THE AMBASSADOR ON HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT AS DDEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, (B) EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR U.S. AID, (C) RECALLED TALKS SOME TIME AGO WITH VERWOERD AND VORSTER ABOUT NEED FOR CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA, (D) RECALLED CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM REGARDING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA ISSUES; (E) DISCUSSED LESOTHO'S POSITION ON TRANSKEI, AND (F) INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR ABOUT A LETTER HE HAD WRITTEN TO PRIME MINISTER VORSTER ABOUT THE MURDER OF BASOTHO'S ON THE LESOTHO-SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LESOTHO. HE STRESSED THAT LESOTHO WAS APOOR COUNTRY TRYING TO ACHIEVE GREATER SELF-RELIANCE. JONATHAN SAID POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE DID NOT MEAN MUCH TO THE MASSES OF BASOTHO UNLESS TRANSFORMED INTO AN INCREASE IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL THE PEOPLE. HE
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EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE AMBASSADOR IN HIS NEW CAPAICTY AS

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOULD WORK FOR EXPANDED AID, TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND LESOTHO. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR LESOTHO'S SUPPORT ON ISSUES OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO US AND ASSURED JONATHAN THAT EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO BROADEN AND DEEPEN U.S. - LESOTHO RELATIONS.

3. SOUTHERN AFRICA. JONATHAN NOTED THAT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND ENERGY WAS BEING DEVOTED TO SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES. HE RECALLED A CONVERSATION WITH SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VERWOERD THE FRIDAY BEFORE HE WAS ASSASSINATED. HE TOLD VERWOERD THAT SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD CHANGE ITS APARTHEID POLICY AND WORK FOR RECONCILIATION OF THE RACES. JONATHAN STRESSED TO VERWOERD AND LATER TO VORSTER THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID POLICY WOULD LEAD TO RACIAL CONFRONTATION.

4. JONATHAN CLAIMED THAT IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM HE CALLED ATTENTION TO "FLEXING OF MUSCLES" IN ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE AND NAMIBIA. JONATHAN SAID HE STRESSED TO NEWSOM THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE U.S. TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA BECAUSE CHANGES WERE TAKING PLACE WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY LEAD TO VIOLENCE. JONATHAN SAID THAT AS AN AFRICAN HE COULD FEEL THAT VIOLENCE WAS INEVITABLE; HIS PLEA WAS FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE AND NOT VIOLENCE. HE TOLD NEWSOM THAT BLACK PEOPLE EXPECTED THE U.S. AS LEADER OF THE WESTERN WORLD TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE; THEY FELT THE U.S. HAD TURNED A DEAF EAR.

5. JONATHAN THEN RECALLED A CONVERSATION WITH VORSTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER IN WHICH AGAIN HE TRIED TO POINT UP THE DANGER IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SITUATION. JONATHAN SAID HE TOLD VORSTER THAT WHETHER HE LIKED IT OR NOT THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD CHANGE. ON THAT OCCASION VORSTER AND MULLER TOLD JONATHAN HE HAD BEEN BRAINWASHED BY THE OAU AND HAD TURNED AGAINST THEM. JONATHAN SAID HE WAS MERELY TRYING TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF STARTING NEGOTIATIONS ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH BLACKS TO EFFECT PEACEFUL CHANGE AND TO AVOID VIOLENCE. VORSTER AND MULLER TOOK OFFENSE AND RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND LESOTHO BECAME RATHER STRAINED.

6. JONATHAN SAID DURING A LATER CONVERSATION WITH VORSTER AT
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JAN SMUTS AIRPORT IN APRIL 1974 HE HAD TOLD VORSTER THAT DURING THEIR LIFETIMES THERE WOULD BE CHANGES IN RHODESIA, NAMIBIA, ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE AND SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. HE HAD TOLD VORSTER THAT ALTHOUGH SOME BLACK PEOPLE ACCEPTED SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA THERE WAS CERTAINLY NO WHOLEHEARTED ENDORSEMENT BY BLACKS. HE AGAIN URGED MEANINGFUL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID SYSTEM.

7. JONATHAN THEN RECALLED A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH A BASOTHO WHO IS RESIDENT IN SOUTH AFRICA. THIS BASOTHO HAD TOLD JONATHAN THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE GUNS, CANNONS AND SPHISTICATED WEAPONS, BUT THE BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA HAVE A SINGLE "MATCH"; "WITH A STICK THEY COULD LIGHT A FIRE, BURN HOUSES, FACTORIES, MINES, VELD WITH GRASS, PLANTATIONS, FARMS IN CLUSTERS AND THOSE ISOLATED. THE RECENT BURING OF SCHOOLS WAS THE SMALL BEGINNING OF MIGHTY ENDING, THERE WAS YET TIME TO LIGHT MATCHES". JONATHAN TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT IF HE RETURNED IN FIVE YEARS HE WOULD SEE A TOTALLY DIFFERENT SOUTH AFRICA IF THE WHITES DO NOT BEGIN TO CHANGE.

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8. TRANSKEI. JONATHAN NOTED THAT THERE WERE MANY BATOTHO LIVING IN THE TRANSKEI AND THAT THE GOL HAD NOT YET MADE UP ITS MIND REGARDING RECOGNITION. HE SAID IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONSIDER RECOGNIZING THE TRANSKEI BECAUSE IT WAS THE RIGHT OF EVERY GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE AS IT CHOOSES. JONATHAN SAID EVEN THE XHOSAS WONDERED WHAT KIND OF INDEPENDENCE THE TRANSKEI WOULD RECEIVE. HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE MANY XHOSA LEADERS WHO WERE BETTER INFORMED THAN MATANZIMA; THERE WERE LEADERS MORE POPULAR IN TRANSKEI THAN MATANZIMA WHO WERE ROTTING IN JAIL ON ROBBINS ISLAND AND IN EXILE ABROAD. HE SAID

THERE WERE MANY BATOTHOS IN THE TRANSKEI WHO DID NOT WISH TO BE RULED BY OR BE PART OF THE TRANSKEI. JONATHAN THEN CALLED ATTENTION TO LESOTHO'S HISTORICAL CLAIM TO PART OF THE TERRITORY OF THE TRANSKEI;

HE SAID THE BATOTHO HAD BEEN DISPOSSESSED BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAS. HE NOTED THAT MANY BATOTHOS WERE DESCENDENTS OF MOSHOESHOE I. HE SAID THESE PEOPLE MIGHT ACCEPT TRANSKEI INDEPENDENCE IF SESOTHO IS THE SECOND LANGUAGE OF THE TRANSKEI. IF SESOTHO IS NOT THE SECOND LANGUAGE THEY WILL NOT AGREE TO PART OF THE TRANSKEI. JONATHON SAID THIS MAY SEEM TO BE A SMALL POINT BUT IT IS A SERIOUS ISSUE; HE REQUESTED THAT THIS BE CONVEYED TO THE USG.
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9. BORDER DIFFICULTIES. JONATHAN TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD WRITTEN VORSTER JUST LAST WEEK ABOUT THE NUMBER OF BATOTHOS WHO HAD BEEN SHOT ALONG THE LESOTHO-SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER BY SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY FORCES. JONATHAN HAD POINTED OUT TO VORSTER THAT IN NO CASE HAD SOUTH AFRICA BROUGHT ACTION BEFORE A COURT OF JUSTICE. THE ONLY REPLY THAT THEY RECEIVED WAS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN'S THOUGHT THE "BATOTHOS WERE DOGS TRESPASSING ON THEIR TERRITORY".

10 COMMENT: JONATHAN IN HIS COMMENT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WANTED TO IMPRESS UPON THE USG THAT HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE TREND OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA HAS BEEN ACCURATE AND DESERVES SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. HE SEES LITTLE PROSPECT FOR A CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF AFRIKAANERS IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE CLEARLY BELIEVES MASSIVE RACIAL VIOLENCE IS INEVITABLE IN SOUTH AFRICA UNLESS SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES ARE MADE IN THE APARTHEID SYSTEM WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. JONATHAN IS DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT LESOTHO, AS AN ENCLAVE OF SOUTH AFRICA, WILL BECOME ENGULFED IN VIOLENT RACIAL CONFLICT RESULTING IN A REPATRIATION OF THE 200,000 BATOTHO MIGRANT WORKERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA, MASSIVE INFLOW OF REFUGEES, COMPLETE DISRUPTION OF LESOTHO'S ECONOMY AND CREATION OF MORE INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. JONATHAN IS THEREFORE HOPEFUL THAT THE U.S. WILL LEAN HEAVILY ON VORSTER TO PERSUADE HIM TO EFFECT A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN APARTHEID TO AVOID VIOLENCE.

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